GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1252
ANSWERED ON:02.05.2016
India's Stand at WTO Meet
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Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has approved India"s stand at the World Trade Organisation (WTO) Conference held in Nairobi on food security and farm exports and if so, the details thereof;
(b) whether India has been able to protect the interests of farmers in the WTO summit and if so, the details thereof;
(c) whether India has secured a reaffirmative ministerial decision on the public stockholding issue and if so, the details thereof; and
(d) whether India is seeking for a special safeguard mechanism proposal to be taken up on a high priority basis and if so, the details thereof?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (INDEPENDENT CHARGE)
(SMT. NIRMALA SITHARAMAN)

(a) Yes. The Government has approved India's stand in the Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization (WTO) held in Nairobi in December 2015, including the issues of food security and agricultural export competition. As proposed and approved, India had pursued the following agricultural issues at the Ministerial Conference: an agricultural Special Safeguard Mechanism, a permanent solution for public stockholding for food security purposes and a longer phase-out period for developing countries for certain kinds of agricultural export subsidies.
(b) Given the importance of public stockholding for food security purposes for India's food and livelihood security and the necessity for an agricultural Special Safeguard Mechanism (SSM), India worked actively for Ministerial Decisions on these issues. The elimination of export subsidies by developed countries will provide a level playing field to the farmers in developing countries. Through these decisions, India has been able to protect the interests of its farmers in the multilateral trade negotiations.
(c) The Ministerial decision on public stockholding for food security purposes includes commits WTO members to engage constructively in finding a permanent solution to the issue of public stockholding for food security purposes. The effects of this decision, read with the Bali Ministerial Decision of December 2013 and the General Council Decision of 27 November 2014, translates into a commitment by the WTO members to agree on and adopt a permanent solution by the Eleventh Ministerial Conference of the WTO in 2017.

(d) India also negotiated a Ministerial Decision which recognizes that developing countries will have the right to have recourse to an agricultural Special Safeguard Mechanism (SSM) as envisaged in the Doha mandate for which negotiations will be held in dedicated sessions with the General Council mandated to regularly review progress of these negotiations. The SSM is intended to help developing countries protect their agriculture sector from the possible adverse effects of import surges.
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